Dance as a Force of Communitas: Shifting Social Roles and the Influence of Christianity, Industrialization, and the Enlightenment on Shared Movement

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Abstract

Dance used to be a central, integral, and integrated part of everyday human life, fundamental in the regular cultivation of Communitas. However, a shift has occurred in the way that human beings experience, define, and participate in dance. The communal dance of our ancestors no longer exists. In western society, with an expanding global inclusion, people have stopped engaging regularly with one another through movement as part of daily lives and typical routines, and as a result, people have stopped cultivating and residing in a state of communitas with any regularity. Dance now lives in a liminal space, separated and carefully differentiated from the routine proceedings of standard daily life. This shift has occurred gradually and by degrees. Not denying other influences, the spread of Christianity and the accompanying eradication of pagan religions, the rise of industrialization, and the impacts of the Enlightenment all influenced dance's role in western society. The loss of dance as a predominant mode of social connection in the western world draws into question its relevance and role in modern society.

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Process Analysis Statement

Growing up I have always felt like I belonged to a community; one that extends beyond my immediate circle of family and friends to many others living in geographical proximity to me. Though my experiences related to dance and community have inhabited their own spheres, they have also overlapped and intertwined often, and in some cases my dancing reality has shaped and defined my experience of community. Not living in a society with a danced culture, I consider myself lucky to have had dance as a primary part of my life and to have had it fill many communal functions. I realize that my experience is unique, and thus it is something I wanted to examine more in depth. Coming to college and studying dance as my major also brought up other points of interest and contention in regard to how I viewed myself as a human, dancer, scholar, and member of a community. It was these contemplations that sparked my inquiry for what would become this thesis.

Part of the inspiration for delving into the line of thought that, through many transformations, became this thesis, was the realization that I do not experience or relate to dance in the same way as many of my peers at Ball State. Growing up, dance was always an expression of community. First, my town of Crested Butte held and continues to hold many community wide dance events for various purposes including: the celebration of the solstices, to protest against mines and other environmental concerns, and as fundraisers for local organizations. In these events, members of the community all come together regardless of age or status and move together. My experience of community through dance also extends to my studio practice. Each technique class I took began and ended by setting intentions and acknowledging the other people in the room, giving thanks for being able to move together in solidarity throughout the class. While I understand that this is far different from dance as a culturally integrated part of a

traditional society, it is also much different from the way I experienced dance at the collegiate level. There, community was addressed to a certain extent in so far as we were expected to support and encourage our peers, and the environment was incredibly accepting and welcoming, however, personal growth and achievement came first. While this is not a negative, it was far different from my previous experience which prioritized solidarity and unity.

This realization was furthered by my studies in dance history about indigenous cultures across the world and the integral role that dance played, and continues to play, for many different groups of people. With this knowledge, I began to question why the same wasn't true in my own culture. Why was dance something so culturally extraneous, only practiced by a select few individuals in the west, when in other areas of the world it was fundamental to daily life? And in connection, why were dance and community not inextricably linked in all facets of life?

These questions provided me the perfect opportunity to combine the physical and intellectual worlds that together constituted my college career, and thus I began the process of researching that eventually took me to this thesis. The first part of my research started with the general history of dance, dating back to the first depictions of human dance nearly 2.5 million years ago. The purpose in researching the ancient history of dance was to attempt to understand how it came about as a part of human societies and what its initial role was. In other words, how did the earliest humans experience and relate to dance? My research there brought me into the fields of anthropology and sociology, and I began to examine concepts and theories around the original purposes of dance. Though I have little formal experience with these fields, I quickly found them very interesting, as they attempted to answer, or at least ask lot of the same questions, I had about human nature and humans living and functioning together in groups.

At this point in my research I had little direction but was extremely interested in the process of exploration and learning. It seemed that with every new book I read, I encountered five others that were tangentially related, and thus, I began to acquire a wide variety of sources. At this point, the biggest problem I faced was figuring out how to narrow the scope of my inquiry and choose a topic that was not only interesting, but feasible to tackle in one semester. From this, I learned that perhaps one of my greatest assets as a scholar is curiosity. There was a period in January when I didn't even want to write a thesis at all, all I wanted to do was to continue to read and research and continue expanding my knowledge. I finally settled on a topic through an in-depth examination of my notes and a process of looking for possible intersections and connections between seemingly disparate pieces of information. I was greatly aided in this process through conversations with my project advisor. She would listen to my findings and then offer ideas I had yet to think of and encourage me to approach my information from different perspectives.

When I settled on my topic, I had a broad base of supportive information, but needed to delve more into the specifics. For this, I reached out to other professors for help, including Jason Powell and Jenn Meckley. They both willingly entered into conversations with me about my topic and offered me resources to further my research. Jason was especially helpful in this process, as one of the themes I was attempting to tackle was the Enlightenment, and I have little experience thinking and writing about Philosophy. At this stage, much of the information I encountered regarding the Enlightenment and the history of industrialization was extremely technical and specific, and thus provided a challenge. I spent many hours reading, rereading, and taking notes in an attempt to understand concepts I was not immediately familiar with.

After this had been completed, the next challenge was integrating such seemingly disparate ideas. The technical language used to discuss industrialization did not lend itself easily to conversations about dance, and as such, I had to find a way to connect and make understandable the information I was gathering. However, this was also one of the most rewarding part of the process because I realized how creativity can manifest itself in academic writing. As a dancer, I had predominantly considered creativity in relation to movement and movement invention, however, during this process I realized that creativity plays a huge role in academic research and writing as well. In order to find parallels and connections in the subjects I was researching, I relied heavily on my power of creativity, and as a result, found that I was able to uncover a spider web of deeply interrelated ideas, that at a surface glance seem very sperate.

Related to creativity, part of the inspiration in undertaking this project is my firm desire that dance be understood as not existing in solely a physical realm, but rather that it is an intellectual pursuit as well. Throughout my college career I have struggled with my identification as a scholar and dancer, but through this project I have realized that I am both, and that these identities are not in fact separate or mutually exclusive.

Most importantly, this project is an attempt to understand and define for myself, and by extension for others, what dance is and what its impacts can be. I have learned that while I will always be grateful for, and appreciative of, professional dance as a high art form and for the artistic and expressive potential that emerges from highly trained and physicalized bodies, to me, this is not where the heart of dance lies. The core of dance lies within the people who participate in it. What I want to focus on, both in my movement practice and scholarly pursuits, is the movement that connects and binds humans. The movement that relates human beings to one another and cultivates community in the face of division and separation. It is this manifestation

of dance that has the power to transform a fissured world and to create solidarity in the face of crippling polarization. It is this communal dimension of dance that I wish to illuminate and advocate for, showing through my research that it has an integral place in society, even today.

Dance as a Force of Communitas: Shifting Social Roles and the Influence of Christianity, Industrialization, and the Enlightenment on Shared Movement

Introduction

Dance as a human activity has been recorded across vast geographic expanses and throughout millennia. The earliest depictions of dance date back to c. 40,000 BCE, to the Aurignacian culture of the upper Paleolithic era, and over 500 more dancing images have been dated to the following Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods, making dance almost the only artistic motif that describes human activity during these eras (Garfinkel, "The Evolution*"* 285). Anthropologist and archeologist Yosef Garfinkel notes that "the lengthy duration of dance depiction as a dominant artistic motif, together with its dispersion across broad geographical expanses, testifies to the efficiency of the dancing motif as one of the most powerful symbols in the evolution of human societies" (*Dancing at the Dawn* 1). In fact, historians and anthropologists state that dance was the dominant motif for describing human interaction for over 5,000 years, from the eighth to the fourth millennia BCE. A transition to other motifs (including eating and farming) did not occur until the advent of agricultural societies, when populations expanded beyond small communal groups and hierarchies began to develop (Garfinkel, *Dancing at the Dawn* 68). As historian Allison Weir confirms, "Well before people had a written language, and possibly before they took up a settled lifestyle, they danced and understood dancing as an activity important enough to record on stone" (22). Though the ephemerality of dance makes its history difficult to study, as only elusive traces remain in the form of images, and much later writing, its importance to the emergence of humanity is nevertheless undeniable.

The original function of dance is understood to be closely related to the ways in which other animal species rely on movement – for the purposes of courtship. Using the body, a suitor can show coordination, strength, and health to a potential mate without language, music, or communal rites. This most basic function of dance, inherited from homo sapiens' predecessors, precedes all its other functions (Garfinkel, "The Evolution*"* 287). However, as humans continued to change and evolve, so did the role of dance in their lives. Garfinkel explains that while other species dance for purposes of communicating and mating, humans are the only ones that do so communally. Communal dancing, understood as a group of individuals moving their muscles together rhythmically and establishing a regular beat, is "like language, a capability that marks humans off from all other forms of life… learning to move and give voice in this fashion, and the strengthened emotional bonds associated with that sort of behavior, were critical prerequisites for the emergence of humanity" (*Dancing at the Dawn* 4). Thus, dance is affirmed as instrumental in the development and maintenance of human societies.

Evans-Pritchard stresses that dance is a joint, rather than an individual, activity, and therefore must be examined and explained in terms of its social function or value (Qtd. in Garfinkel, *"*The Evolution*"* 288). What, then, is the social value of dance? A value that necessarily makes the requisite expenditure of time and energy worthwhile, especially during periods of human development when the very act of survival demanded nearly undivided commitment? Though the answers are nuanced, historians, anthropologists, and dance historians agree that dance is a major mechanism in the creation of social cohesion and solidarity (Garfinkel, "The Evolution*"* 284). In other words, dance brings and keeps people together

It may prove helpful to examine this concept of social cohesion in relation to language. Spoken language creates and facilitates community by allowing the sharing of information and

experiences within groups. It is also a bonding mechanism that developed to enable the cohesion of large groups, as bands of early humans began to expand in size. However, as historical linguist Robin Dunbar explains, “despite having the most articulate communication system in the animal kingdom… language itself doesn’t bond groups together. Something deeper and more emotional was needed to overpower the cold logic of verbal arguments. It seems that we needed music and physical touch to do that” (Dunbar 152). Dunbar explains that dance filled this role, not only as a complex communication system in its own right, but as a bonding force that reaches a deeper level than spoken language is able to attain.

This conceptualization of dance is expanded upon in the following definition, describing dance as

> A complex form of communication that combines the visual, kinesthetic, and aesthetic aspects of human movement with (usually) the aural dimension of musical sounds and sometimes poetry. Dance is created out of culturally understood symbols within social and religious contexts, and it conveys information and meaning as ritual, ceremony, and entertainment. For dance to communicate, its audience must understand the cultural conventions that deal with human movement in time and space. (Kaeppler 196)

This definition places dance within the larger context of human communication and within the complex framework of human societies. However, though it acknowledges the cultural component without which dance would not be relevant, it fails to acknowledge the communal dimension of dance which makes it not merely a physical act nor merely a means of communication, but rather a system of intrapersonal connection and force of group cohesion. It is

this communal function of dance that has created, transformed, and maintained societies throughout the ages, and without which, humans would not experience life in the same way. This ineffable yet undeniable bond created through shared movement has been the subject of various studies and inquiries, igniting the curiosity and passion of people from distinct times, cultures, and belief systems. What is it about dance that connects humans to their fellows in a way nearly unparalleled by anything else in human history? Perhaps the best explanation comes from the concept of communitas, coined by anthropologist Victor Turner and studied by his wife, Edith Turner.

Though Edith Turner asserts that communitas is beyond strict definition, she lays out several of the fundamental components, stating: "It has to do with the sense felt by a group of people when their life together takes on full meaning… A group's pleasure in sharing experiences with one another…" (E. Turner, 2-3). Scholar Olaveson, in an analysis of several interrelated anthropological theories, elaborates:

> Communitas is an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and undifferentiated communion or community of equal individuals. It is an essential and generic human bond. It involves the whole man in relation to other whole men, and is the quick of human inter-relatedness, devoid of judgementality; it is comprised of egalitarian, direct, non-rational bonds between concrete, historical, idiosyncratic individuals who are equal in terms of a shared humanity. Is it a modality of human interrelatedness, human being stripped of status role characteristics – people just as they are, getting through to each other… the experience of communitas is also usually a deep or intense one, and belongs in the intuitive or emotional realm, as opposed to the rational one (Olaveson 104).

Here, the concepts of equality and interconnection are key and point to an underlying universality by which all humans are connected, and which is brought to the surface through shared experience. The existence of communitas as theory and reality, noting the important stipulation that communitas can only be achieved temporarily, or that it is not a permanent state, denotes explicit periods of its absence. In healthy communities, communitas comes and goes with regularity, and though there are other modalities by which it can be achieved, dance is the means which will be considered here. Dance used to be a central, integral, and integrated part of everyday human life, fundamental in the regular cultivation of communitas; however, a shift has occurred in the way that human beings experience, define, and participate in dance. Through this lens, the question arises: when and why did dance stop playing a central role in communal life and cease to be a primary force in the creation of communitas?

The communal dance of our ancestors no longer exists. In western society, with an expanding global inclusion, people have stopped engaging regularly with one another through movement as part of daily lives and typical routines, and, as a result, people have stopped cultivating and residing in a state of communitas with any regularity. Dance now lives in a liminal space, separated and carefully differentiated from the routine proceedings of standard daily life. This shift has occurred gradually and by degrees, and though not the focus of the ensuing argument, the first steps of this transition are important to understand, if only in summary.

Dance, even in the west, was not simply entertainment but rather an integral part of life for ages. Garfinkel affirms this point, stating, "in village life, dance was an essential and organic part of the groups functioning, not an optional adornment or stage performance (*Dancing at the*

Dawn 66). The emergence of dance as a liminal activity coincides with the rise of civilization and the amplification of social hierarchy that historically accompanies this transition. This is seen during the development of ancient civilizations including Egypt and Mesopotamia, where dance first emerged in a role other than as part of daily communal life (Garfinkel, "The Evolution*"* 292).

In such cities, kings and nobles began to distinguish themselves from peasants, servants, and slaves, a transition paired with the increase of specialization and skilled labor. From this distinction rose a class of professional artists, among them dancers, who served to emphasize the status of the elites, thus furthering social stratification. These early professional dancers began to execute complex forms of movement that required specialized physical training, and thus the dances they performed diverged from dances of the "common" people. In this way, what is now termed folk dancing emerged as the dance of the people, separate from the performative spectacles of professional dancers (Garfinkel, "The Evolution" 292-3). This point acknowledges the fact that since the dawn of civilization, professional dancers have existed in a realm unrelated to the cultivation of communitas and separate from that which is considered communal dancing. However, in this context, professional dance existed as a minor subsection, involving a small number of people, and in addition to communal dance, not instead of it, as it predominantly does now. This transition of dance from a culturally integrated communal practice to a culturally auxiliary activity in a liminal space, occurred slowly over expanses of time. It is crucial to note that this shift did not occur homogeneously in all cultures, but rather manifested differently in Europe than in other parts of the world. The focus here will be on Europe and what is widely considered "western civilization," noting an important distinction from traditional cultures in which dance is still an elemental part of daily life.

The contributing factors to the shift of dance's place western society are myriad and nuanced. However, three significant catalysts of the change are the advent of Christianity and the eradication of pagan religions, the process of industrialization, and the age of Enlightenment. All of these historical forces helped lay the foundation for the age we currently experience in the west, and profoundly affected the way movement is perceived and practiced as a communal activity.

Christianity

Though not the central argument of this paper, it is impossible to discuss the changes dance has undergone in the western world without a brief reference to Christianity, as the power and force of this religion and those who propagated it affected every facet of early European life. For much of its history Christianity has been an evangelical religion, requiring the conversion and subversion to the church of those not previously Christianized. Christian conquest of western Europe was achieved through the military feats of Germanic tribes. With Germanic territorial conquest came the equally fervent attack on the preexisting religions of the conquered peoples. These pre-Christian religions were predominantly pagan, and to varying extents, danced religions (Bryant). One such example is the predominantly female cult whose members were known as Maenads and worshipped the god Dionysus. One of the most important traditions of this religion was known as Oreibaia, or winter dance, in which the women engaged in a "frenzied dance" in the woods. Philosopher Frederich Nietzsche, reflecting on the practices of the cult, noted that "what the god demanded… was nothing less than the human soul, released by ecstatic ritual from the horror of individual existence into the

mystical oneness of rhythmic unity in dancing" (Ehrenreich 34). This observation points not only to the primary role of dancing in such religious practices, but also to the importance of unity and the cultivation of communitas through shared movement.

At first, elements of paganism survived under the guise of Christianity. Though outwardly Christian, the Christianization reached only a superficial level, and many rituals performed under the guise of the church retained the fundamental magic and dancing of paganism, some of which was even promoted by church Fathers (Bryant 9). For instance, Clement of Alexandria (150-216 CE), instructed the faithful to "dance in a ring, together with the angels, around Him who is without beginning or end." This suggests that aspects of early Christian religious practice contained circular or round dances, typically characteristic of pagan worship (Ehrenreich 65). It was only after 1400 that the church was able to successfully eradicate pagan culture in most areas (Bryant 9). The various pagan religions practiced throughout Europe became overpowered by "Christian solemnity and liturgy" and the communitas fostered by many of these religions began to die as the rigidity, somberness, and hierarchies of Christianity took over (Bryant 9). Dance in connection with religion was in most areas, forbidden or greatly restricted due to the pervading fear about the ways in which dance diminished hierarchies through the creation of communitas and thus enabled people to connect to God directly without an intermediary (Ehrenreich 84). This possibility risked the irrelevancy of the church and therefore was mitigated through the censorship of dance. Harvey Cox, historian and theologian remarks on the value and power of dance, stating, "a people who dance before their gods are generally freer and less repressed than those who do not" (48). It was exactly this freedom that the church sought to inhibit, and by crushing the modality of

expression of freedom, they were able to successfully end not only paganism, but an entire dance tradition and an era of communal life marked by the sharing of communitas through movement.

This context, including the history of paganism in Europe and the subsequent repression of dance by the Christian church, is key in understanding the transformation of dance's role in society and the processes through which dance came to be deemed culturally auxiliary – in other words, the various modalities through which dance stopped occupying the same sphere as community and moved to a distinct and unmistakably separate space. In this transition, one must acknowledge the myriad social, economic, and political factors influencing society in Europe to varying degrees over the past millennia. In addition to Christianity, both Industrialization and the Enlightenment were major catalysts in the changing role of dance in western society since the 16th century.

Industrialization

Industrialization as an academic concept and historical process is generally considered to be synonymous with sustained economic growth and is said to occur when changes in material technology coincide with an apparently limitless increase of real income per capita (Wrigley 24). In the process of industrialization, the earliest stages of which took place in western Europe beginning in the 17th century, agriculture was gradually replaced with industrial production and coincided with a large population shift from rural to urban areas known as urbanization (Wrigley 25). Sociologist Herbert Blumer provides a further detailed definition of industrialization:

> It is recognized to be a radically different type of economic production, based on the utilization of physical power such as steam and electricity, the replacement of hand labor by machines, and the development of a factory system. Appearing and

> developing as a new type of economy, it has moved group life from an agricultural base to an "industrial" base. In this movement multitudes of people have been shifted from rural to urban conditions of existence, torn away from old modes of living, and ushered into a new organization of life… viewed historically these changes in Western countries appear extensive and profound. (2)

Blumer also notes that, "As a new form of economy… industrialization is perceived as a major agent of social transformation" (3). This assessment is key in the consideration of industrialization in relation to dance, for it must be evaluated in a social context as opposed to a strictly theoretical or economic one, as the social factors are of primary relevance. In this respect, Blumer poses the question, "What is industrialization as a process in social life?" (xiii). In answering, special regard is given to communal life and processes. "It [industrialization] is a powerful force pushing out along diverse lines, undermining established forms of group life, occasioning disorganization, and forcing institutions and social life into new molds. Scarcely any phase of group life is seen as immune to its touch" (Blumer 4). In fact, social relationships, types of residences and dwellings, family structures and relations, standards of living, values and ideals, and interests are all influenced by, and changed through industrialization. More specifically, the social transformations commonly attributed to industrialization include: "the migration of people, the disintegration of rural villages, the growth of cities, the tearing down of authority systems and traditional leadership; the disorganization of families and communities; the stimulation of unrest and discontent" (Blumer 3). These changes are sufficient to show the far-reaching effects of industrialization, and all are to some degree relevant in the consideration of the transformation of dance as it exists inside of and within a community structure. First,

however, a more thorough examination of the characteristics and social implications of industrialization is necessary.

Viewing industrialization from a sociological perspective, there are several processes or broad social factors that determine the organization of group life. These aspects generally identified with industrialization together "constitute a kind of general social system, which molds social life to its form" (Blumer 40). It is important to note that they are not products of, but rather "forces intrinsic to industrialization" that are essential in understanding its full character and power (Blumer 40). Originally proposed by Blumer, they can be summarized as:

a. Increasing occupational specialization and a greater division of labor
b. Detachment of production from family and village institutions and its lodgment in a seperate institution with its own distinctive character
c. The organization of a new system of prestige, authority, and power
d. The process of urbanization
e. The generation of impersonal social relations, replacing personalism and paternalism
f. A process of individualization (the detachment of individuals from social groups, a kind of atomization of society)

So as not to be considered out of context, it is important to note that "each of [these are] based on a recognition that industrialization is identified with the introduction and expansion of a manufacturing system" and thus key social forces grow out of an underlying economic shift (Blumer 41). Through these defining forces, one can understand the dominant social patterns of industrialization as ones of individualization, differentiation, and separation, all of which, among other potential implications, oppose conditions necessary for the existence of Communitas, and which connectedly, do not foster an environment in which communal dance can prosper.

Fundamental in the discussion of industrialization is the concept of rationality. This term applies to personal, social, and economic behavior and defines the relationship between the three, one which becomes undeniably stronger and more influential during this time. Rational behavior is defined as "that which maximizes economic returns either to the individual, nuclear family, or the state," depending on the scope within which one is considering rationality – either at a personal, or wider political level (Wrigley 27). This extremely limited characterization of rationality nonetheless influences and defines all other facets of personal and social life and prevailing intellectual theory.

Economic growth is considered a fundamental aspect of rationality, and its pursuit in turn influences many aspects of society. Wrigley provides an example through comparison with traditional, or pre-industrial society. In traditional societies, it is considered rational "to retain in a family group…, adult male kin who produce less than they consume. To expel them would do violence to the social system, and cause damage not offset in the eyes of members of the family by any gain in income per head for those who remained on the holding" (Wrigley 27). Contrarily, in the context of industrial society, such behavior is considered irrational, as it is antagonistic to the newly emerging goal of maximum economic production without regard for limitations (Wrigley 27). Though a generalized example and not universally applicable, it illuminates the value of communal ties in traditional societies and characterizes them as not monetizable and of more importance than economic gain. Ferdinand Tonnies expands upon, and to a certain extent rejects this example, arguing that "the essential difference between modern and traditional attitudes lies less in the degree of rationality involved in decisions of this type than in the degree of consciousness on the part of the individual of the moral bases of his actions." (qtd. in Wrigley 27). These two arguments, when considered jointly express the

fragmenting and individualizing effects of rationality in an economic sense in addition to a decreased consciousness of moral implications, both of which effectually weaken communal infrastructure.

Rationality is also the main determinant of the creation and definition of roles within industrial society. The more highly defined a role or position is, the easier it becomes to ensure someone with proper and specific qualifications and abilities is appointed, and consequently that the labor is carried out with the greatest possible efficiency. Referred to as division of labor, this process results in increased productivity and economic return, as well as the emergence of a new arrangement of people along status lines and an increase in social stratification. The result is the disappearance of the 'jack of all trades' and the commitment of all personal time to the pursuit of a single end, which must align with high economic return (Blumer; Wrigley 29). In a traditional society, a man might be called upon to perform a variety of roles based on his position and status in society, and attitudes towards him will reflect this multifaceted view, taking into consideration his kinship ties, religious practice, leadership status etc.. Contrarily, in a modern society, "utilities to be maximized are concentrated in a narrower band and pursued with more urgency" and the economic value of one's position is the only thing given any weight or consideration (Wrigley 27). This greatly limits the scope of what is considered worthy of pursuing based on the limitless growth dimension of rationality. That which does not further economic gain falls outside of the narrow band of utilities to be maximized and is deemed irrational, thus greatly reducing and limiting the ways in which one can participate meaningfully in society (Wrigley 27). Unsurprisingly, dance, and specifically communal dance, falls well outside of the scope of what is considered "rational behavior," as it in no way contributes to economic gain. Additionally, as previously defined, communitas belongs not to the rational realm but rather to

an emotional and intuitive one, making its value null in a society that no longer values anything outside of what is considered rational.

In order to effectively qualify value in an industrial context, there must be some common measure of worth for goods and services, some universal standard that defines and easily conveys the value of a wide range of products and services. It is for this reason that money replaces the barter system and becomes the standard measure of worth during the industrialization process. As an extension, monetary accounting makes it possible to estimate the costs and returns of every possible course of economic action and to compare different options in order to ensure the highest economic return (Wrigley 28). As paid positions differ in income, privileges, authority, and esteem, social expectations of both public and private behavior emerge based on status (Blumer 42). This differentiation serves to further stratify society and ascribes behavior based on intensified social hierarchies, thus diminishing egalitarian relationships and possibility to join together in movement regardless of age, gender, or status (Stoletje 266).

Self-interest is another term that defines the era of industrialization and which has acquired a special meaning in this context. Defined as “the adoption of a calculus of advantage” in which “the unit is the individual, or, at the widest, the nuclear family, and the accounting scale is pecuniary gain” (Wrigley 31), self-interest in directly related to rationality in terms of pursuing economic growth. In considering the limited scope (i.e. the individual or immediate family) through which it is defined, a degree of autonomy much greater than was needed or accepted in traditional societies is required through the principle of self-interest, thus leading to a heightened sense of the importance of individualism (Wrigley 31). Given that the widest concern in trying to gain advantage in the industrial world is the nuclear family, “rights and obligations linked to kinship become less extensive and less easily enforceable” (Wrigley 32). This perfectly

coincides with and helps describe the disintegration of rural villages and the transition to differently structured lifestyles. The loss of extended community groups and their replacement with isolated family units greatly impacts the space available to experience communal activities of any sort. Tonnies, believing that traditional and modern societies differ profoundly, discusses the pressure towards atomistic individualism:

> The family becomes an accidental form for the satisfaction of natural needs, neighborhood and friendship are supplanted by special interest groups and conventional society life. These attitudes eat like acid into the fabric of traditional society, destroying solidary groups. When this happens old values and attitudes are no longer internalized by the young, and the web of rights and obligations which binds together small traditional communities weakens, and in time, dissolves (qtd. in Wrigley 33).

Though admittedly a very critical stance, the dissolving of solidary groups, which are a prerequisite for the existence of communal dance, is undoubtedly a side effect of industrialization and the accompanying rise of individualism. It is important to note that before industrialization, community was viewed as a body, a living being. All people worked together to help ensure the survival of the social organism to which they were connected. However, with the advent of industrialization, people started to become mechanized and began to view society as a machine rather than a social organism (Simon). As dance requires vitality, the transition to mechanization endangers it through the disintegration of community structures and the sedation of vivacity.

In summation, the process of industrialization in Europe beginning in the late 17th century had profound impacts on all facets of life, with the social dimension of the impact being of

utmost relevance. Through the development of a new economic system based on production and mechanization, social factors that determined the organization of group life arose. Of these, paramount were: "increasing occupational specialization and a greater division of labor, the generation of impersonal social relations, and a process of individualization" (Blumer 40). These processes had an isolating and atomizing effect on society, and as a result, communal dance dwindled and with it the cultivation of Communitas. In an attempt to explain why industrialization had such a profound impact on social life and connectedly on dance, Blumer poses that industrialization constitutes an ideology. "Industrialization has all of the basic characteristics of a true ideology – it represents a way of action, it has a goal, it constitutes faith, it is a working policy, and it is something on which fundamental dependency is placed" (3). In this view, industrialization gave people something to believe in, to worship, and depend upon, and thus replaced community and interpersonal relationships. Though industrialization alone had a profound effect on dance, another process is worth considering as well. The Enlightenment, with its emphasis on reason and individual autonomy, relates to industrialization in many ways and its effect on communal dance is also significant.

The Enlightenment

The Enlightenment was the philosophical and intellectual movement that emerged out of Renaissance humanism and dominated European thought beginning in the 17th century. Though predominantly defined by and through the philosophical concepts that emerged and developed during this time, Enlightenment thinking expanded far beyond intellectual theory and manifested itself in tangible ways that affected various facets of daily life. To understand the social and artistic implications of the Enlightenment, a fundamental prerequisite to understanding the ways

in which dance and community were impacted through these new belief systems and world views, one must first examine the underlying philosophical and intellectual motifs that guided and sculpted the era, for the Enlightenment was born in philosophy before it grew into and permeated other aspects of culture.

The Enlightenment, in a general sense, emerged as the ideology of the middle class. The concepts that would come to define it were first entertained by philosophers and other intellectuals of middle-class backgrounds and attitudes. Though every philosopher had his own nuanced perspective, several themes dominated thought across all of Europe. Of these, paramount were the concepts of personal liberation and individual autonomy. Individual autonomy, defined as one's individual ability to seek and find truth, or the "freedom to think and explore, the right to trust their own experience," was the most highly regarded and sought-after achievement during this era (Solomon 22). Connectedly, personal liberation – in this case personal freedom from an oppressive or monarchical structure in which the individual was of no value other than as part of the whole system – was regarded as the ultimate source of happiness (Solomon).

Rene Descartes, a philosopher and scholar widely considered to be the father of the Enlightenment, helps to further this important pillar of thought. Accompanying the notions of individual and political freedom, and paramount in the discussion of community and dance, is the idea that nothing was excused or justified by tradition or custom (Solomon 25). In Descartes' view, reason was the only thing of value or trustworthiness. He firmly believed in relying on one's own reason and argued against appealing to tradition or authority, stating that any petition to established tradition or standing authority ran contrary to personal autonomy (Solomon 24). Emerging from a recent past entrenched in the restrictions and confinements of a feudal system,

it is no surprise that custom and tradition were regarded as the enemy to freedom; however, this underlying distrust of anything inherited, anything sanctified or solidified by time, would come to have profound and ultimately isolating and fragmenting effects on humanity and human connection created through movement.

Primary though they are, personal autonomy and liberation and political freedom alone do not define the thought trends of the Enlightenment, but rather are part of a much larger and complex intellectual framework, integral to which are rationality and reason. In fact, freedom and autonomy cannot be fully understood or appreciated in a social context without examining their relationship to reason. It is no misnomer that the Enlightenment is referred to as the age of reason, for this was the determining characteristic of the era. Defined as "the faculty or process of drawing logical inferences," reason lies in "opposition to sensation, perception, feeling, desire, as the faculty by which fundamental truths are intuitively apprehended" (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica). Robert Solomon, professor of philosophy at the University of Texas Austin, however, notes that the "demand for reasonableness became an aggressive way of life… became a demand for power and the ideology of an ambitious and prosperous bourgeoisie" (22). The pursuit of reasonableness became more than a rejection of the foundations of past assumptions and traditions, or the simple rejection of feeling and desire, and began to define what was possible, acceptable, and valuable in both personal and social realms. As a consequence, utility became the dominant social value, and that which was not regarded as useful was condemned as irrational and unreasonable (Solomon). The connection to industrialization here is significant, as a belief in economic gain at all costs deemed anything not directly applicable in the pursuit of this end worthless. In other words, that which was not easily monetizable was not valuable, and therefore unreasonable and not worthy of pursuit. There was

an emphasis on progress both in the intellectual world of the Enlightenment and the mechanical world of the industrial revolution, with progress being viewed as forward motion towards rational achievements. However, it is worth qualifying this from an outside perspective, noting that "there is no form of progress that cannot, with a slight shift in vantage point, be termed decadence and denigration" (Solomon 30). Denigration of customs and traditions and community, inseparable from which is dance, is precisely what would come to pass as a result of enlightenment thinking.

Related to the exaltation of reason above all else and the unbridled pursuit of rationality was an attack on the passions. Defined as "embodied affects, desires, appetites," the passions were the precursors to what are currently understood as emotions (Lloyd). As part of a general revolt against antirationalism, the passions as a part of the human constitution, and any outward expression of them even more so, was condemned. Constant guidance and constraint of emotions was encouraged, as emotional expression lay in opposition to rationality. As Descartes believed, "there is no soul so weak that it cannot, if well directed, acquire absolute power over its passions" (Gay 187). The above stated objective of conquering the passions speaks to the attitude of the time that viewed any emotional or passionate expression as weakness and lack of will power. French Enlightenment philosopher Denis Diderot furthers the conversation on the passions, taking a less critical stance:

> People ceaselessly proclaim against the passions, people impute to the passions all of men's pains, and forget that they are also the source of all his pleasures. It is an element of man's constitution of which we can say neither too many favorable, nor too many unfavorable things. But what makes me angry is that the passions are never regarded from any but the critical angle. People think they do reason an

> injury if they say a word in favor of its rivals. Yet it is only the passions, and the great passions, that can raise the soul to great things (qtd. in Gay 188).

This analysis of the passions is slightly more nuanced and encompassing than the dismissive, bordering on accusatory, views of Descartes and others. The claim that the passions not only can but are unapparelled in their ability to "raise the soul to great things" (Gay 188), speaks to their potential utility and provides for them a place in the context of rationality, speaking to the possible coexistence of rationality and passion. Diderot seems to understand that the existence or expression of passion does not negate the value of reason; however, not all of his contemporaries agreed. Unfortunately, any utility that the passions do possess in regard to their ability to excite and arouse, is one outside of the accepted realm, which views utility as inextricably linked to scientific discovery and economic gain. The passions (in this context referred to as emotions, or other constitutions outside of man's critical capacity for reason) lie in direct relationship to dance. Avoiding the equation of dance and emotions, there does exist a correlation between the suppression and disdain of what is here referred to as the "rival" of reason and the departure from and suppression of communal dance, seen in so many of its manifestations to arouse, encourage, and excite a range of responses, all reasonably within the realm of the irrational.

The passions also came under attack from a different angle during the Enlightenment. Through colonization and exploration of the Americas, Europeans came into contact with many indigenous groups for whom dancing was still an integral part of life. In accounts of the customs of people from Africa to South America, "unrestrained passions" displayed through dance and music are often referred to (Turner, *Process*). In European eyes, unrestrained passion exhibited in dancing showed a lack of refinement and culture, and thus was looked upon with scorn and disgust, if not also perverse interest. It is no surprise, then, that Europeans, steeped in a culture of

rationality and encouraged suppression, all in pursuit of personal autonomy and liberation and inundated with misconceptions and exaggerations about the "savagery" of indigenous cultures, would lean away from that which was seen to excite and incite the passions in an expression of communal dance.

Another important pillar of the Enlightenment can be described through scientific pursuit. A climate of intense scientific interest marked the academic world of the 17th and 18th centuries. Scientific pursuits were considered the most valuable endeavors, insofar as they aided in the possibility of attaining a rational understanding of the world (Gay). The success of mathematical and natural sciences paved the way for the science of man, or the study of human nature (Padgen 149). In fact, the study of human nature was considered the pinnacle of all sciences because it was from man that all other conceptualizations of the world, and hence sciences of the world, were created (Gay). Predominantly manifested in the emerging field of psychology, this focus on man led to an era of self-consciousness and subjectivity (Padgen). Having used the sciences to create a firm understanding of the world, man turned inward to examine himself and discovered an autonomous "I" separate from "Them." So highly was this "inner self" honored, that its acquisition was considered a mark of progress (Ehrenreich 139). This self-consciousness can also be examined as a heightened perception of the self as subject and as substance – the self divided into two distinct parts, a knowing subject and substance to be known, studied, and explained (Dupre). This complex duality, the subject of many philosophers' inquiries in its own right, also marked a drastic departure from the predominant view of the previous centuries, in which the singular self was part of a community – a greater whole, only one unit in a much larger configuration. This turn inward, where humans began to intensely examine themselves and their internal processes seperate from the functioning of a larger social organism, is standard and

unsurprising from a modern standpoint. However, it was unprecedented during the 17th century and marked the transition from the group or community to the autonomous individual as the primary source of power (Ehrenreich 138-141).

There was, however, a price to be paid for the "buoyant individualism we associate with the more upbeat aspects of the… Enlightenment." According to historian Ti-Fu Tuan, the cost of this new sense of personal autonomy was "isolation, loneliness, a sense of disengagement, a loss of vitality" (qtd. in Ehrenreich 140). Louis Sass corroborates this, clarifying that the new emphasis on disengagement and self-consciousness "makes the individual potentially more autonomous and critical of existing social arrangements which is all to the good. But it can also transform the individual into a kind of walled fortress, carefully defended from everyone else (qtd. in Ehrenreich 137-8). In the wake of the feudal systems of the middle ages, a certain degree of autonomy and criticism of oppressive social and political systems was welcome. However, it is this second point, of individual isolation and disengagement, that is of particular interest and import to the discussion of the nature of communal dance during this period. In an industrializing environment explained and defined through Enlightenment thinking, individual freedom, economic utility, and rationality dominated every aspect of life. The harsh lines drawn by these values strictly excluded any practice or belief that did not fit into the defined parameters. In addition, the disapproval of tradition and custom served to push man further away from the communal dancing that once permeated social life.

Conclusion

Perhaps one of the best ways to understand the influence that both industrialization and the Enlightenment had on communal dance is to step forward in time to the modern era. Today,

we predominantly see dance in the western world as art form and entertainment genre, though admittedly this characterization does not account for dance in all of its manifestations. Victor Turner's explanation of the word "entertain" as well as his concept of the "sphere of the optional" provide insight into why dance exists most predominantly in these areas. He states that the word, and hence the concept, to "entertain comes from the old French 'to hold apart' – that is to create a liminal space in which performances may take place" (*Process* 37). This is how dance is primarily experienced today – in an isolated space marked off from daily life, where doer and observer are distinctly separate. Turner explains that, relatedly, the "sphere of the optional" (*Process* 37) creates a distinction between play and work, with the former being optional and the latter, mandatory. As a form of entertainment (as in the west) dance becomes play separate from work, residing in the sphere of the optional for the large majority of people, noting here the exception of professional dancers for whom there is more overlap. Oppositely, in traditional communities, play and work are interconnected and both are mandatory, as they coexist without the option for separation. In communities where dance plays an integral role in daily life, play and work are interrelated and dance fills multiple roles simultaneously (*Process* 37). Also central to this discussion is the fact that non participatory art forms such as theatre, opera, and ballets came into public popularity in the 17th century – replacing participatory forms of entertainment such as carnival and other public festivals, most of which included dancing (Ehrenreich 138). This clearly extricated dance and placed it in a liminal space, physically separate from the proceedings of daily life and the routines of the masses. Dance Historian Adrienne Kaeppler corroborates this point in asserting that dance has not always lived in the liminal space in which it currently resides. She explains that "unlike dance in the west, in many other parts of the world dance is not simply entertainment." She also notes that dance "must be seen as an integral part of

a total way of life" ("Dance Ethnology" 116). Dance in the west long ago stopped being viewed as such, and the result is a loss of something irreplaceable.

Harvey Cox, Christian scholar and historian, claims that "when festivity disappears from a culture something universally human is lost" (11). Though festivity encompasses more than just dance, movement – and more specifically communal movement – is a vital part of festivity, and thus the statement can be extended to include and relate specifically to dance. Cox also acknowledges the ways in which industrialization, with its emphasis on rationality and individualization, has made industrial man an isolated creature, intent on pursuing economic gain and distanced from the nurturing ties of community. To this, he offers a solution to regain what humankind has lost: "Man is essentially festive and fanciful. To become fully human, western industrial man must learn again to dance and to dream" (Cox 12). It is no surprise that the remedy he recommends is dance and the revitalization of the imagination. These two aspects of human life are arguably the two most diminished by rationality as it is understood in relation to economic gain in an industrial context, and reason, as it is related to logic and the dismissal of feeling and desire in Enlightenment thinking.

This point is expanded upon and brought into a broader context through an examination of one of Sigmund Freud's theories. Cox, quoting Freud, asserts, "Repression is the price we pay for civilization" (qtd. in Cox 31). Without attempting to evaluate all the possible implications of this assertion, considered in an industrial context, it seems to hold some truth. In the industrial era, the exaltation of individualism, economic gain, and rationality, along with the intensifying of social hierarchy and diminishing of communal ties, resulted in a fragmented and singularly focused society, and, consequently, in the partial repression of human festivity, celebration, community, and dance. This is exemplified by the diminished presence of communal festivals

containing dance such as Carnival, and the view of dancing as extraneous and a waste of time (Ehrenreich). Though undoubtedly advantageous in some facets of life, the benefits of industrialization, most notably increased economic gain, is not justification enough to deem irrelevant, or worse, foolish, the pursuit of shared experience and community in dance.

Scholar and author Lawrence Bryan notes that dancing constitutes "a bonding uniting people over and above any formal social bonds" (Bryant 7). Though not stated, this clearly points to the presence of communitas cultivated through dance, as communitas represents an egalitarian bond between members of a group without regard to status positions. As formal social bonds are strengthened through the process of industrialization, and individualism is emphasized during the Enlightenment, this possibility of unity without division or hierarchy through dance becomes even more rare, and, therefore, more important, because what is truly at stake in the disregard of communitas is not just dance, but humanity.

Dance is inherent in all people and it makes us all more human. It connects us to ourselves, our history, each other, and community. The power of movement connects us with nature and brings us back to the most fundamental part of our being, a part that has remained essentially unchanged since the Paleolithic period nearly 2.5 million years ago. However, we have stopped dancing together with the same regularity and communal engagement our ancestors once did. So, what does that mean for humanity? Perhaps the most profound impact is the diminishment of community. Harkening back to the earliest function of dance – to create group cohesion, connection, and solidarity through communitas – it is evident that dance has an unmatched ability to foster community. In order to appreciate the importance of this, Rabbi Dosick, Ph.D., renown rabbi, writer, speaker and spiritual teacher, eloquently illuminates the value and purpose of community:

> In Community, there is shared memory, unity of purpose, mutual commitment, reciprocal responsibility, and common destiny. In Community, there is powerful energy that heightens awareness, supports unfolding consciousness, strengthens cosmic connection, enhances prayer, deepens meditation, and affirms transcendent experience. In Community there is sharing of tragedy and triumph—joy enhanced, sorrow eased. In Community, there is support for personal healing—the pain and suffering of physical disease and emotional trauma tempered and soothed. In community there is encouragement and energy for global healing—the task of transforming and perfecting the world advocated and empowered. (qtd. in Nayfack 1)

As fundamentally social beings, human engagement in community is vital for the prospering of both the individual and the group. Community also provides support and connection that cannot be found elsewhere, least of all in economic gain or solitary quests for reason. The discussion of communtias is again fundamental here, and it is important to understand that "it has to do with the sense felt by a group of people when their life together takes on full meaning… [it] comes when a group is ready to rid themselves of status and structure and see their fellow as they are" (E. Turner 2). Once again, it becomes apparent that the human search for meaning is at the core of this conversation. Throughout the ages, humans have searched for meaning through art and literature, politics and philosophy, through economics and monetary gain, in reason and rationality. However, it seems that all of these external pursuits, though perhaps valuable in their own right, if for nothing else in demonstrating the human capacity for curiosity and discovery, are often ill-fated and peripheral to what really matters.

As viewed from today's intensely polarizing climate, little remains that authentically brings humans together, and the forces that pull us apart are multiple and formidable. However, this does not negate the possibility of a powerful unification. Despite widespread separation and division, there remains an intense and irrefutable desire at the core of humanity for something more, for meaning in connection and solidarity, for "seeing our fellows as they are" (E. Turner 2) – as human beings with a common spirit. This was the original purpose of dance – to connect humans to each other – and this is a power that can still be called upon and harnessed. Though it has been centuries since the western world has engaged with any sort of regularity in communal dance, it is not too late to revitalize the practices of our ancestors and reimagine them for our historically unique situation. In an era where differences are demonized more often than celebrated, and familiarity passes for community, communal dance has the unprecedented potential to serve as a medium through which human beings can relate to one another and celebrate humanity in all of its interconnectedness. Communitas through dance is a right and a fundamental human joy we must reclaim.

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